

Make the Podcast You Want to Listen To

The Podcraft Podcast

Colin: Hey folks, and welcome to Podcraft, one of the longest running how to podcast series on the planet. I'm Colin Gray from thepodcasthost.com. And on this brand new season, you'll hear from some of the best independent podcast creators in the business. We're talking well over a century of combined experience, thousands of episodes, and millions of downloads. These folks truly are legends in every sense of the word. But if you speak to them, which is exactly what we're going to do, they'll all be quick to point out that they're not superheroes, they're just ordinary mortals like you and me. They're like us because they're passionate about their topic and they love to get behind the mic and talk about it. But what sets these creators apart from many others is that they each started podcasting and they just didn't stop. They've kept on going, publishing quality content consistently over a long, long period of time. And when all said and done, it's a stamina. It's that staying power that enables a podcaster to build communities and businesses, sell products and services, and become well respected thought leaders in their space. But here's the big thing. The fact that these indiepod legends haven't quit doesn't mean they've never thought about it. Far from, in fact. So here's our first major takeaway of the season. It's not the thought of quitting that'll determine the future of your content. It's how you respond to that thought. So let's hear from Kathi. She is an award winning travel blogger who runs the immersive storytelling podcast Wild for Scotland.

Kathi: To be honest, I'm constantly close to quitting. Not because I don't like producing the content or the podcast, but it is a struggle. It is a struggle to find, to balance the time you spent on producing the content for the podcast and the time I spend in other things or other parts of my business and things that actually produce money. So with monetization being tricky in my niche, and also just for one person to do it all on their own, I'm constantly battling with this fear that it's not worth it. And I think that's a combination of impostor syndrome as well as maybe things don't always work out as fast or as successfully as you want it, speaking to sponsors, getting Patreon community supporters, things like that. But in the end, what keeps me coming back is the emails I get from listeners, the messages I get from listeners, the reviews we get, the joy and pride I feel myself when I listen back to an episode and hear the story or hear the conversation I had with a guest, knowing that I've made an impact for myself, at the very least because I've learned something new and I've trained or practiced my creativity, but then also hearing from others who've felt inspired or encouraged or confirmed in their own experiences in life. So that always makes me want to come back and produce more, and the money kind of fades away a little bit in the background. But I do spend a lot of my own money on the podcast, and that is a worry with the cost of living crisis, and many other things as well. So that is probably the thing that makes me closest to wanting to quit at times. But then I do get clients through my podcast as well. I do get people who say, we found you through the podcast, we love it so much. We want you to help us plan our trip to Scotland. So I know it pays off in other ways. And I think just remaining aware of that and remaining open to the return on investment might look different than what you thought it looks like. It's something I need to remind myself of all the time. And that then pushes that thought of wanting to quit away again. And I love producing the podcast. It's one of my most favorite pieces of work I've ever done. I'm so proud of every episode we produce. And even if I feel like I don't know how we

can go on, I know we have to go on because I love that feeling, and I know so many people enjoy it as well.

Colin: And across the Atlantic, fellow travel podcaster dCarrie has had similar thoughts in the past.

dCarrie: Absolutely. Multiple times. And it tends to be more of like a moment where it's just like, okay, you need to take a break because life is lifeing like other stuff in life is going on. I've got other responsibilities, and then it's like the holidays, and then it's like, you know what? I'm just not going to record this week. I'm going to take a break and we'll come back fresh next week. And sometimes I have to just not beat myself up about it. Sometimes it's a matter of, you're either going to put out a really trash episode or we cannot put out an episode. And I think that when you show up the following week and you have a little conversation with your listeners, listen, y'all, last week was rough. I needed a break. Or you say, you know what? For this week, I am going to show up this week and next week I'm not going to. And then I'll say, you know what? Next week we're going to take a break. I'll be back the following week. Whatever it is, it generally tends to be around the holidays, but for the most part I really just try not to make it difficult for myself more than it needs to be.

Colin: This is the first glimpse of a thread we'll see running throughout the course of this season, that your podcast doesn't need to be foot to the floor every single week for the rest of your life. In fact, many of the most successful long running podcasts lean into that seasonal approach, especially if their topic has its own natural ebbs and flows. Mean. Here's Rob and James from Eurovision podcast, the Euro trip.

James: Do you know, I think probably Rob and I have probably come close to. Hmm, I wonder how long this goes on for. We probably think it a good few times a year, but speaking personally, I think probably once we get to the end of the Eurovision season every year, so obviously the contest happens in May and then we probably do one or two more episodes after that just to wrap up the season. And then we take a break for a month or two months or so. And always, I think every year we've done it, I've always had the thought. I think that's probably it for me. And I've never ever went to rob and had that conversation, but I've always had that thought in my mind, thinking we've done some great things over the year. We've spoken to some brilliant people, we've broken some huge stories that have created waves in the Eurovision community and that sort of thing. We've had loads of fun and we've visited some great cities and all this sort of thing. And then every year I always think, how can we top that? I don't think we can. And maybe it's just a natural instinct sort of thing where you achieve something in life and you think, what's the point of trying to do it again if you don't think you can do it any better? But then we end up having a chat again about the podcast and thinking what we can do over the course of the next twelve months. And immediately that idea of quitting or stopping just disappears. But I think for sure, every year I think that's it, that's enough. We've done what we can. It's been a nice run, but let's just end it there. And we never do. And I do wonder how long it goes on for, because I'm not sure we ever thought it would go on this far.

Rob: No, I think this year, more than any other year, I'm speaking on behalf of myself. But, James, I'm sure you'll agree as well, I think this year, more than any

year, what you've just said there, it was kind of know, how do we ever top this? Because Eurovision was in the UK, which we never thought would ever be possible. When we started doing the podcast, we were in Liverpool for a week. We were in the press center every day. We were chatting to artists, we spoke to the winner, we were doing some stories that no one else was doing. Our coverage was probably as good as it's ever going to be. And it's like, well, what do you do now? But there is always something, I think there's always a passion there behind something that you know, you've worked so hard on. It's such a big decision to end it, but also when you care so passionately, I think about the subject that you're covering. I think that helps, that does help provide the motivation to keep going. But also I think if you are a solo podcaster, I think it probably is much harder because at least for me and James, we have each other and we can talk about it and we can brainstorm ideas and we know at least halve the load. So, for example, a small example of that is that we do a weekly podcast. I'll edit one week, James led it the following week, and we alternate like that. So that's just a small example of how we can kind of ease the load a little bit, which I think does indeed help the longevity of the podcast.

Colin: Here's Susan from the Lush Life podcast.

Susan: I've never quit. I've never thought about quitting. But there have been times where I've not done as much. For the first, like four years, I pretty much did almost every week. And anyone knows who has a podcast, it is a time sucker. It just eats your time away if you want to do it well. And I got to the point where I just couldn't do anything else. So I decided a few years ago also not to bring us all down, but my father was very ill and then he eventually died. So during that time, I said, my brain can't handle anymore. So I'm just going to tell everyone using my newsletter, this is what's going to happen. I just can't do it for about six months. And when I came back, I decided to do it every two weeks and then sometimes every month. As long as you see the people who listen to you as people, and you talk to them and you tell them what's going on. I think it's fine. But no, I've never thought about quitting because I'd love to do it.

Colin: And now let's hear from Andrea of the Savvy Social podcast.

Andrea: Those 1st 20 episodes were the absolute hardest to create, even though I felt like it was the most consistent I'd ever been with content creation. Also, I was trying to edit and publish and write the show notes and do all of the things. And it's very easy to get behind with a weekly show. It's a constant grind, and I almost gave up. And that's actually when my first sponsor reached out to me after episode 20, right around that time. And so actually using that sponsorship fee to pay for an editing team helped me keep going with the weekly show. I think I would have either switched to seasons or done, like, every other week or a monthly show, because it's a lot of work to produce a show without having the team. Plus, I'm running a whole business over here, too.

Colin: Here's Gabe from the Board Game Design Lab.

Gabe: I did pause it for six or eight months or something like that. That was interesting. I was in a transition from. I was moving from Honduras back to the States, and so life was chaos. I'd been there eight years. My wife had been there

twelve. We have four kids. It was a lot to figure out. And so I was like, let me try some new things. And that's when I really started getting into YouTube initially. And it was for a personal channel. It wasn't like game design. It was just like, making videos and telling stories and trying to understand this whole nother thing. And the more I did it, the more I was like, oh, I can make this part of my business. And I pivoted back to the board game design lab to make videos for that and start posting the podcasts in video form. And that was a really good six months of growth and transition and learning and figuring things out. And then the community still continued. I still put out the weekly newsletter. I was still super active in the Facebook group. It was just, there were no new podcasts there for a little while. So I didn't exactly quit. I just wanted to pause and go try some new things, figure out life. That was completely. Everything about life changed in a very short amount of time. And so it was just a good time to go on hiatus, but then came back and have been doing episodes since that break. And then now going into next year again, it's not quitting it's just pivoting. It's doing something different, repurposing content, repackaging things, trying something new. Because I feel like once you do something for a while, especially if you're doing a specific topic right now, if you have a show where you're interviewing psychologists one day and you're talking to historians the next day, and you're talking to factory workers the next day, you will never run out of opportunities. Because it's so varied. It's harder to be successful doing that because who are your people? It's harder to find that follower base. But if you're doing a show that's very specific in nature, in my case, game design, you kind of get to a point, it's like, well, what else is there to say? I could do the same type of episode, but just talk to different people. I guess I could do a worker placement episode with six different worker placement designers. Maybe that would be interesting, but I feel like a lot of that information is going to be kind of the same. It's going to be 75% similar. It's like, well, is it worth even doing a bunch of those episodes? So I feel like you kind of get to a place where after a certain amount of content, again, saturation, we get to a place. It's like, not only is the audience saturated, maybe I'm saturated, maybe as the host of this, I'm kind of saturated and all this stuff, and it's like, let's go do something different. Let's go try something else and figure out something new. So that's what I've been more likely to do. Quitting. I've never really thought about quitting. Like, this started off as a hobby. It never started as, oh, I want to turn this passion into a profession, ooh, I want to make money from this. No, it was just something I did to learn and to grow and because I saw an opportunity and a need, and it was a great way to keep me connected to people in the US. When I was living in Honduras, there were times where the only person I spoke English to was my wife for days. And so to have these interviews, these moments where I could talk to someone in the United States and we could chat about life and culture and football and things like that on the front end and the back end and just kind of getting to know people and then in the middle have this really great, interesting conversation about game design that was super helpful for me. That was really nice. And so never really thought about quitting. It's one of those things like, once I decided to do it, I was all in. I know a lot of people, they try to dabble. It's like, I'll do one or two. It's like I went into it thinking, I'm going to do this until I can't, and then just kept doing it, kept showing up and got a little bit of traction, a little bit of momentum, which definitely helps. Success creates more success. It just is what it is. It would have been much harder to keep going if nobody was listening. Like, if I was doing all this and putting in the effort and all that. But I think I still probably would have because it wasn't about the listener base. It wasn't, oh, I've

got to get a million downloads. I'm just going to do something I think would be really fun, and we'll see where it goes. So that was really helpful.

Colin: Gabe touched on some of his thoughts, his motivations, and his goals when he was just getting started out in podcasting. And that's a good place to switch gears and find out more about what was going through our creators' minds before their shows even existed. Few people have been in the podcast game longer than Mur Lafferty, and here's a glimpse into her thought processes. Back in 2004.

Mur: I'd always wanted to do something like talk radio or like essays on the morning news shows when they do like a slice of life type essays. But at the time, Internet radio was way ahead of streaming technology, and so even doing an Internet radio show sounded more complicated than trying to get a radio job, even. And I had no experience doing that. But then a friend of mine mentioned that. October 2004, I think friend of mine suggested that there was this new thing called podcasting he was really interested in. And I took a look at it, and it was exactly what I was looking for, in that I could go ahead and talk into a mic, and as long as somebody subscribed to it, it was guaranteed to hit their inbox when I was done. And so it took me a while to figure out exactly what I wanted to say, and I finally decided to do some geeky essays about being a nerd with a toddler kind of thing. So, yeah, that's how I got started. Then a couple of months later, I realized there wasn't a lot of information out about for writers, except for Michael Stackpole's the Secrets podcast. So that's when I started. I should be writing, which was kind of, and it's still going, just a show to encourage beginning writers on in dealing with all of their issues. Like impostor syndrome and worrying that one rejection means the end of your career kind of thing. So I just like talking into a mic, I guess. But I never thought that a radio job was a career I could follow. I don't know why. So I never looked into it that way. But once there was a way I could record online, and then podcasting made it easier for people to get. I was all in.

Colin: Mur created a podcast to help others, but also to help herself through those early days of being an aspiring writer and trying to get published. These days, she is a published author. But how did her writing career look back in 2005?

Mur: Well, I hadn't sold anything. I had done some work for RPGs, mostly for White Wolf, but hadn't sold any stories or definitely not a novel. I don't even think I'd written a novel by then, but I'd noticed in myself that I would have emotional reactions to things like rejections and think, this feels terrible, but it doesn't feel like reality. I remember getting a rejection and being absolutely sure that not only did they reject my story, but they put my story up on the wall as a guide of what not to buy and never to buy from this author. And they would remember me like I could never submit to them again because they would remember me as the person who sent that crappy story a couple of months ago. And even though feeling all of that, I knew it wasn't reality. So I just wanted to sort of. I didn't set out to chronicle my writing career because I didn't know I would have one, but I just wanted to let people know. Look, it sucks. I'm experiencing it too. It's okay. So, had not done a lot of writing at the time. Just I had an in with an RPG company and kept getting work from them, which was good, but that's about it.

Colin: There's no getting around it. To become a published author, you need to actually be a good writer. How you get there is very much Mur's domain and not ours. But I was really interested in how closely intertwined Mer saw the success of the podcast and her success as a writer.

Mur: I can't imagine it happening another way. Most of the first couple of years of my professional career were due almost directly to the podcast. What I didn't know I was doing was in meeting up with people at conventions and doing interviews with them. I was building a network. People would be like, oh yeah, Merle Lafferty, she does that podcast. And there weren't a lot of podcasts at the you know, I was one of the writing. You know, more people knew about me, and I had a good online presence, and then I had an agent at the time I sold my first book, but my agent wasn't shopping that book. She was trying to shop something that I'd released to be a podcast a couple of years earlier and wasn't interested in my current book. So I'm the one that sold that to orbit. And I got into a party where I met my editor because of the podcast, because I was interviewing somebody who was going to the invite only parties for the Hugo awards, and he took me as his plus one. He just offered because he had one and I didn't have one. So, yeah, I'm glad that people like my writing enough to continue to buy my books, but I don't know if I would have made it through the regular slush pile if I'd done it that way.

Colin: And staying on the subject of books and writing, here's host of the fight and through podcast, Paul Cheall.

Paul: My dad was in the second World War, and when he retired, he wrote his memoirs and I got them published through Pen and Sword. And it was to try and get people interested in the book. I thought, well, if they listen to an episode which has a chapter of the book, then they might buy the book. And to be honest, it helps with sales, but not massively. But when you do a book as an author, a single book, you don't make a fortune. It's just for fun and a labor of love to get your father's memoir published. But during the early days of getting the book published, I had a website and a number of people wrote to me with their memoirs, and I had some superb stories sent to me, and I put those on the podcast as well. And that started the ball rolling. So it wasn't just Dad's book, it was memoirs of other people. And coincidentally, I came across a couple of veterans that I went to interview. So that went from just reading a chapter of a book to reading other people's memoirs and then doing interviews. And it all started from then, and it's carried on.

Colin: Let's give a wee nod to Ernest Hemingway now as we segue from literature to alcohol. This is Susan from A Lush Life Manual talking about her podcast origin story.

Susan: It was really one meal that did it for me, that pushed me into the whole podcasting world, because I was originally, and still am, a travel writer, luxury travel writer, and I was on a press trip to the south of Italy. In fact, I was in the island of Capri. And we had gone to a glorious four hour lunch. And 2 hours later they said, it's time for dinner. And I was like, it's not possible. I've just eaten as much as a human could possibly do. And the restaurant was lemon themed. And I saw that they had limicello, homemade limicello. So I said, look, just give me a glass of limicello. I just can't eat anything. And while I'm sipping it, I'm like, you know, I really like to drink

more than I like to eat. And then I went back to the hotel and I started talking to the bartender, and I really loved his story. And I had been, I guess, not really a huge listener of podcasts, but I loved this American life. My brother had introduced me to it, I don't know, a couple of years before. And for some reason I thought his story would make a great podcast. I wonder if there are any great or if they're not just great, just any podcast in the drinking sphere. And there were a few in the US and not really any in the UK, and I live in London, so I thought, oh, well, why don't I just start one? So I bought a tiny microphone that you could attach to your iPhone and just went back to all the PRs I knew for hotels and was like, can I interview your bartender for a podcast? And most of them are like, we have no idea what you're talking about. But sure, yeah, whatever it is, if you want to interview someone from the hotel, go crazy. And that's really the start of what is now called Lush Life podcast. It was originally I wrote under a blog called Best Bits worldwide. And so originally I called it best Sips worldwide, and I found that doing it for about two years. So it didn't really sit with the luxury travel blog that comfortably. Should I say it was kind of okay. I wrote this luxury travel blog, and I had this podcast where I interviewed people in the drinks industry. So that was eight years ago. And so about six years ago, I decided it really needed its own home. And that's when I started my blog, which is called a lush life manual. And from that, I just cut off the lush life, the play on lush, being someone who drinks a little too much as well as luxurious. And that's kind of how it all began.

Colin: Here's Alana and Samra now from the She Well Read podcast.

Samra: We were both working corporate jobs, so just needed something to get through the day. And podcasts are kind of really helpful for those types of things. Especially when you're doing, like, mindless work, which sometimes you are when you first get out of college. And I honestly just wanted community, so it all stemmed from that for me. I just felt like I didn't have an extracurricular for the first time in my life, and I was like, oh, I've got a lot of energy, and I need to channel it into something productive. So I was just thinking, like, okay, a book club could be fun, and it could be, like, for the girls. It doesn't have to be stuffy and serious. We can just have a good time, and it's not that deep. And mostly it's just about catching up with your know, at the end.

Alana: yeah, that's the whole vibe of the show. But, yeah, piggybacking off of Samra. Yes. I had just gotten into podcasts and podcasting and was like, what is this? This is so cool. And so when Samra was talking to me about the book club, and I initially asked her, what if we made a podcast out of it? I don't think I knew what we were doing then, what it would turn into. Of what it is like to see the evolution in front of our eyes over the past five years. But I think also the goal when we started, kind of, like Sam said, was building that community. And also, we both still, to this day, work nine to five jobs. But that's not our end all, be all, necessarily. We're both creatives at heart. And so this was something that kind of was at the start of both of our creative journeys as adults or new adults, because we started this when we graduated college. And so we always knew, we always wanted to take it to the next level, but also have other ventures that stem from She Well Red and starting the book club. So, yes, a little bit of that, too, but definitely the community aspect, also being able to, the amount of people, like the people we've met or who have reached out to us and been like, oh, my gosh, I love your show, or I love the fact that you all

are a bite sized book club. So I don't necessarily feel the pressure of reading like you do in a normal book club. And the fact that we promote reading any and everything, it's just been a really cool journey, I'll say that.

Colin: Rob, the Euro trip.

Rob: So, for me, personally, even though the podcast, the euro trip, has been going for just over three years now, for me, the Eurotrip has been in my life longer than that. So the Eurotrip actually started its life as a show that I did on student radio when I was at university. I started it in 2012. So the euro trip, in its original guise has been in my life for eleven years now, but obviously graduated from university a long time ago. So that was 2014, so almost ten years ago, terrifyingly. And then had kind of done a few bits and bobs since then. Always been a big Eurovision fan and I was working in radio at that point and I wanted to do some sort of Eurovision based kind of project. And it was the pandemic, as many podcasts, of course, started. So this was the summer of 2020, and me and James had met, I think, the year before, and I knew James was also kind of studying something very similar, so kind of like radio and media at the same time. So it almost seemed like a natural fit, really. I think I reached out to James, asked if this was something that he was interested in doing. And at that point, there was a bit of a gap in terms of Eurovision content for Eurovision fans out there because, of course, the contest had been cancelled for the first time in 2020. So we wanted to bring something different to the Eurovision community that was out there and kind of had a thirst for Eurovision based content. And, yeah, I think we wanted to do something a bit different because, yes, we weren't the first Eurovision podcast, but we were probably the first Eurovision podcast that reached out to do feature length interviews with previous artists and contestants. We were the first ones that kind of dove a bit deeper into kind of the journalism and the news side of things as well. And we've evolved the podcast more into that direction, sort of as we've gone on.

Colin: It was cool to see Podcraft as a finalist in the Independent Podcast Awards just recently, 2023, actually, we were in the business category, but of course we didn't win. But who better to lose out to than Vicki Weinberg of Bring Your Product Idea to Life?

Vicki: I am a huge podcast fan, as we've been talking a bit about. Before I started recording, I listened to lots and lots of podcasts. And when I started off my first business, well, actually it was my second business, but the business that led to this is I launched my own range of baby products, which I then sold on Amazon. And when I was in the process of setting that business up, I was looking for all kinds of places for stories and advice and how to get things done. And I could find lots of content online, I could find YouTube videos, but all the podcasts I could find from people who had created and sold their own products were people who felt like they were miles ahead of me, I wasn't finding stories from anyone I could relate to. They were all like people, heads of big brands that we've all heard of, or they were maybe people I hadn't heard of, but they were clearly starting from a different place than I were, people who had a lot of capital to. They could put hundreds of thousands of pounds or dollars into this startup. But I wasn't in that situation. And I found it really hard to find anyone that I could follow or hear from that I resonated with. And so I muddled my way through and I launched that business. But that was always at the

back of my mind. And then it was, I think it was around the end of 2019. I just thought, you know what? I can't find this podcast. But I still think it would be a really good thing for people to have. So I'm going to start it myself. And by that point, I'd been running a products business for a couple of years. So I had some contacts, I had some people immediately I could think of that would be great guests. And yeah, that's really where it started. It was something that I felt was sort of missing.

Colin: So I hope you're enjoying this podcast, and if you're keen to try doing this yourself, creating your own podcast. We created a tool called Alitu many years back now designed to make it as easy as humanly possible to make a podcast. It's got call recording in there. You can record solo, and then it automates a lot of the technical stuff. You get all of your audio cleaned up to make it sound sweet, and you get your theme music and your transitions added in automatically. Plus the editor allows you to edit your audio in the easiest way possible, podcast specific. And it's got text based editing in there, too. So you can edit as if you're editing a word document. Then finally, hosting, you can publish your podcast to the world right inside Alitu using our own hosting. Or you can connect to many of the most popular podcast hosts out there. So it just makes it super easy to go right from recording to editing to publishing all in one place. That's what Alitu is designed to do to save you tons of time and a good bit of money bringing everything into one place. So if you want to try it out, go over to alitu.com. That's alitu.com, and you can use the free trial to see if it works for you. And now back to the show. Let's hear from Andrea of the Savvy Social Podcast.

Andrea: I come from a YouTube background I started my YouTube channel in 2007 and very inconsistently uploaded content through till 2018. When I started my podcast, I actually was inspired by some of my clients who had podcasts at the time. So I was managing their social media and found that it was a lot easier to be them on social because they had this amazing catalog of all of their kind of thought leadership and interviews that they'd been on. So I started diving into the podcasting world. Coming from a YouTube background and podcasting was so much easier than creating a YouTube video because of all the editing required for the videos, I was able to actually create podcasts much quicker than YouTube videos. So that's initially why I got into it. But it quickly became one of the most consistent forms of content that I produced, and a lot of my potential clients would go back and listen to podcast episodes before hiring me for social media. So I started talking about my strategies and my skills and interviewing other people in the space. What are they doing? So it really just started off as a curious way to create content outside of YouTube. And then I completely put all of my energy into my podcast. Now it's just my favorite medium. I also prefer to listen to podcasts now. So back then, watching YouTube videos was the way that I consumed content. And now I hardly ever watch YouTube videos. I always have a podcast on the go because I can take it with me anywhere. So I love it as a consumer as well as someone who produces podcasts. But it really started off as just an easier way to create content that didn't require video.

Colin: dCarrie, Travel N'Sh1t.

dCarrie: I'm a talker. It just naturally kind of happened that technology got to a point where it was easier to talk it than to write it. I've always been a creative, and I

started, I'd say probably 2008 is probably a safe bet to say that. I started with my creative journey and I started doing YouTube and hair reviews and just vlogging, and then I transitioned into blogging. I just would write and I had a really fun website and I had a fun YouTube channel, and it was a good time. And I had dabbled with the idea of podcasting in the early, early days of when podcasting was just like an RSS feed and there weren't different podcast players, and it was pretty much just felt like more of a Google search, but I couldn't figure out the tech and so I kind of just gave it up. And a few years later I had a friend that was looking to start a podcast network, and so he was, you know, what do you think. And I'm like, well, I already have a ton of shit to talk about, so let's do it. And I started recording, and that's how I started. I fell into it, and I already had the content, so it just made sense to package it in, I guess, a more time appropriate way.

Colin: Kathi, Wild for Scotland

Kathi: I started Wild for Scotland during the pandemic. It was very much a case of all of my other work falling away, and also the things I did in my business, which is a travel blog and planning itineraries, none of that felt useful at the time because no one could travel. And so I didn't have really anything to do, and I also didn't feel very useful, which is a very bad combination in my books. So I thought of a way that I could still convey my passion for travel in Scotland without actually having to travel, and also provide something that would be useful for people, even if they're not traveling. And the podcast kind of was the obvious solution at the time, to use a medium that people could enjoy from anywhere in the world to feel connected with the place. And also that allows me to tell stories from my bedroom at the time. So, yeah, it was just the perfect kind of situation to do that.

Colin: Gabe, Board Game Design Lab

Gabe: This was back in 2014. I was living in Honduras and I was working at an orphanage, and I was needing a hobby, right? So when you do that kind of work, especially, I was working three weeks on one day off, twelve hour days most days, and in a lot of ways, I just needed an escape. And so I started working on board games. I started creating games just for fun, right? Just as a hobby. And that was a wonderful way to not only kind of separate myself from the reality of living in a foreign land, doing pretty intense work, I could make a game about dragons and dungeons and whatever, and have some fun with that. And then I started listening to game design podcasts and really enjoying those, but also, at the same time, kind of wanting more. I couldn't exactly find the show that I wanted. I found a lot of really good shows, really good podcasts, but they would have 52 minutes of filler and eight minutes of what I really wanted to hear. It was a lot of, hey, what do you think goes best on a hot dog? Like, what's the best toppings? It's like, what, hey, what movies you watch lately? What games you play? I don't care. I don't care about any of this. I'm here for a very specific thing that you advertise what this show was about. But then the actual meat of the show would be so little as far as like a game design tip or trick or how a mechanism works or something like that. And so the more I listened to those shows, the more I just wanted something else. And fast forward, I don't know, a year and a half, two years, and I had changed jobs. I was doing something a little less intense, little less hours, fewer days of the month working. And so I thought, what if I made a podcast? What would that look like? And so I started doing

research, started looking into all the technical aspects and what kind of Internet you need and what kind of microphone and what kind of software. All the different things. Just trying to figure out could I do. Then, you know, I figured out that my honduran Internet wasn't great, but it was good enough, it would suffice. And I went to the States to go back home and visit, and I bought all the stuff I needed on Amazon, and so I took it back down there to hunders with me. And I just started kind of doing the setup like, okay, I've got the stuff I need now I need to get some guests on this show. I need to find some people who are willing to let me interview them about game design. And I thought, nobody's ever going to say yes. Why would they say yes? Who am I? I'm just some random dude. I don't have any games on the market. I've never published a game. I'm just a hobbyist. I'm just some nobody. But in spite of all the reasons not to, I started sending messages and emails and just saying, hey, I'm starting a show. This is what it's about. This is what I'm trying to do. I'd love to interview you on a specific topic. And I sent out, I don't know, probably 15 messages of, like, I kind of laid out, okay, who would be a great first set of 15 guests? And I think twelve of them said yes. It was wild. All these people that had no business saying yes agreed to come on the show, and all of a sudden it got real. It's like, oh, dang, I got to figure this stuff out for real. These are legitimate people in this industry, and I want to make sure I'm doing a good job. And so that's where it all started. And it's run for 300 and something more episodes since then. But it all started because I saw a need in the market, and not from a business standpoint. I just saw a need in the market for myself. I just wanted something else. And I was like, well, if I can't find it, maybe I can make it. And then it just kind of worked out. And I thought originally, it's like, if I can just get 10, 15, 20 regular listeners, if I can have this little cool core group of people on the Internet that want to hear these interviews and hear what I have to say, that'd be amazing. Fast forward a handful of years, and now the community is over 21,000. It's like, this is crazy. It continues to blow my mind how many people want to tune in and listen to interviews about this tiny little niche in the world? It's a niche of a niche of a niche. It's so small, but yet it still can get traction. And so it's just been a fun ride. We hear this a lot in podcasting, don't we? Someone made a show because it was the type of content they needed in their own life. They wanted info or answers and a topic, and podcasting was a brilliant way to get them. And as it happens, other people have those same burning questions, too. The world's a big place. 8 billion people is a lot of people. More than likely. You're not the only one feeling a thing or thinking a certain thing. Like, there's a lot of other people out there that probably have the same opinion or idea or need or want. And the Internet allows us to find each other. It allows us to connect, and it takes time. It's not one of those things, typically, where you can launch a show, especially in a very small niche, and all of a sudden just explode. But over time, you can pick up your people, you can find the folks that had the same thing, and there's always new people being made. I can't tell you how many people send me emails now and they say, hey, I just found your show. I'm on episode seven. Really loving what you're doing. I just got into game design. I just got into this. I'm so glad that your show exists as this resource. And so that's nothing is like, it's not static. There's a bit of a churn. There's always people coming in and going out of every hobby, every industry, every everything. But there's new people coming in and just creates more opportunities.

Colin: Vicki, Bring Your Product Idea to Life.

Vicki: It was for me, but also because I felt I wouldn't be the only person who was looking for this kind of content. I'd started a blog when I started my business. I started a blog where I was sharing what I was doing with my own business and things I was learning in real time as I was setting it up. And I was getting more traffic to that blog than I ever could have expected. And I'm thinking we're talking like, 2016. So podcasting was fairly new, but it was kind of growing. Not everyone was into podcasts then, were they? I feel like I was, but lots of people I knew hadn't even heard of podcasts back then, which seems crazy, but I kind of had a sense that actually this was a really useful way of finding out more about stuff at the time. I had young kids, and I really liked the fact that I could be pushing the buggy or whatever and have a podcast in my ear, and you didn't necessarily have to be sitting down to read something. And I was convinced that there would be other people in similar situations. I felt I can't be the only one who would find it useful to hear from other product creators, to hear from people you could learn from and be inspired by, but also in a way that didn't involve you having to have ten minutes to sit down and actually read something. So I guess it was all of those factors.

Colin: One thing that's certain in podcasting is that it's never a linear journey. Some creators start a show on one topic, then you end up talking about something completely different. Others stay with their original topic, but pivot their angle, their format, or their aims, you know, further down the line. So here's Daren from the One Percent Better Runner podcast talking about just that.

Daren: I wanted to talk about stuff that I was able to talk about with my friends. So I started the podcast called Cool Black Dudes. CBD radio was the name, and it was this little group that we had, and it was like, black nerdy dudes that sound like me, kind of look like me, that don't really fit into the mold of stereotypical black people. And I was like, oh, we're cool black. Like, we're owning it and cool black dudettes. So I was like, let me just interview everyone that I already just talked to and know how was the black experience for you in America, in Australia, all over the world? And that ended up being how, like, cut my teeth, I guess, is the term on podcasting. And then I was like, okay, I need to start a business. So I already had learnings of how to set up a podcast, how to do this. So I was like, I feel confident enough to start a podcast business and produce other people's podcasts at that point. And then it just kind of spiraled from there. So then I started around 2018, I started my second podcast, which was called Master Sum back then. Now it's called the 1% better Runner, and it's all about fitness and health, but being a metaphor for life and getting 1% better each day and how just running is the same as business, is the same as relationships and all that type of stuff. So that was my second podcast, and that's still going. And I stopped cool black dudes because I just hit 20 episodes. I was like, I'm done. I don't want to do this. No one's really helping me promote it in the group. And then my third one, which was my company, pod Paste, the production company, and I just was like, I'm going to do a podcast about podcasts. And it's actually more about how podcasts can help brands. That's what it really is about.

Colin: dCarrie, Travel N'Sh1t.

dCarrie: I am a serial creative, and if it weren't podcasting, it would be something else. It's more of a way for me to kind of get that creative energy out and not necessarily something that I really hold myself to in terms of hard goals. I struggle

with goal setting as a person, and I find that if I turn this podcast into something that I as a person don't love and enjoy, that it's going to become a chore, it's going to be a job. And I already have a job. I have a nine to five that I'm not a fan of, so why would I turn this into that? So in terms of goals, I've every year kind of dabbled here and there with, oh, well, what's my goal going to be? And I'll spend a good month or two really writing down, oh, I'll try this and I'll do that, and I'm going to focus here. And then it kind of falls by the wayside and I just show up and do the podcast. And so when people ask what the goal of the show is, the goal of the show is for me to creatively express myself. A byproduct of that just so happens to be that I can bring other people along with the content that I am interested in. I can rope people into the story of why travel is so much more than vacation. That's something that I'm very passionate about. I kind of fell into traveling by accident. I didn't leave the country until I was 30. And so it's been eight years of far trips, close trips, big trips, little trips. I've really just discovered that travel is kind of like one of those things that you can look through the lens of travel with so many common run of the mill, everyday occurrences and really see that it doesn't have to be what you initially thought it was going to be. I initially thought travel was going to be luxury accommodations and going on safaris and doing what National Geographic said travel was, or doing what Condrenaz said travel was. And then I realized, like, going to visit my cousins in DC is traveling, going to Mexico for a friend's wedding, obviously traveling, but going to Pennsylvania. I'm in New York, so going to Pennsylvania, which is like an hour and a half away from me, it doesn't have to be a luxurious, far off, distant land. It can really be just exploring communities and exploring different surroundings. And New York is a beautiful state where we've got mountains, we've got the beach, we've got the city, but it's nice to go to California and see what the desert out on that end is like. Yeah, there's a desert in Qatar that was a great time, but Joshua Tree in California was also a fantastic time. So it's like, my goals change as time goes on. But the main gist of what I do with travel and **** is really just talking about the incredible ways that I can see my regular life through travel experiences, the interesting people that I meet in my travels, or the really nuanced ideas that come up after experiencing something new in a new environment. When I come back home, I'm seeing like, oh, well, actually, I can do that here. Let me figure out a way that I can make my own kind of empanadas that I ate at this place, or, oh, so they wear this type of clothing here. Actually, I didn't even know there was a shop that sold these by my job. Let's go check it out and let's figure out what kind of conversation we can have from there. So there's so much travel in really innocuous settings, and I really enjoy highlighting that. So the goal of it really is just to share that experience with people, and I get to just get the conversation off my chest.

Colin: Susan, Lush Life podcast

Susan: Is it delinquent of me to say that I didn't really have a primary goal. I just thought, okay, there's a space that's empty in the podcasting world, and I think that I could fill it, and it was something that I was really interested in. It was really a learning experience for me. I didn't go with a financial gold or monetary gold or how am I going to monetize this. It wasn't even in my head to do that. It was just I'm really interested in learning about these people. I think that someone else might be interested in learning on because I started interviewing bartenders, how they got where they did, and how someone went from working in the back bar or working in a kitchen to becoming a really famous bartender where they're winning awards. That

journey really interested me, so I just thought, I'm interested in it, someone else might be interested in it. So let's just go crazy. As I said, I wasn't really looking to earn any money from it. It was just an organic interest. I guess that was the impetus.

Colin: Pau, Fighting Through.

Paul: From episode one, which was just me reading chapter one of dad's book, it's evolved from just being a read to interviewing a veteran, reading a veteran's memoirs, reading chapters of books that have been self published, one or two that have been published by perhaps recognized authors. But I try and specialize on my tagline is great unpublished history. So in the main, it's stuff that's never seen the light of day. So I'm introducing people to material that they've never come across before. I mean, in some cases, I'm only the third person in the world who's read some of this stuff. It's just been in a dusty loft or in a draw somewhere. So it's now interviews other people's memoirs. I interact with the listeners a lot. I'm always getting people sending in little anecdotes, maybe about their grandfather who did X, Y and Z during the war. And it might only take two or three minutes to read, but it's a nice little story and it's all part of the entertainment. And as time goes on, I curate stories on different subjects. So my next episode, hopefully, is going to be about snipers. So the last few years I've just been curating, collecting stories about snipers in World War II.

Colin: Kathi, Wild for Scotland

Kathi: I think the biggest change over time was obviously once everything opened up again and I could travel again, it meant that I could write stories that were based on new trips and new experiences. It wasn't only drawing from my past, but I could actually also do trips specifically for the podcast. It also meant I could record audio on site and on location, rather than just using sound effects from data libraries and sound libraries. So it was quite incredible in the way that it changed how I traveled and in the way I could tell stories on the podcast and what types of stories I could bring. And then it also changed, of course, in the sense that all of the other things came back. So finding the time to still stay consistent and do the podcast and produce a quality level that I was happy with while also doing all my other work has definitely changed a lot and made it much more difficult, I would say, than maybe at the start. But then you get better over time. So, yeah, it's interesting finding that balance.

Colin: Vicki, Bring Your Product Idea to Life.

Vicki: The podcast at its core is still very much what it was. So it's by product creators, for product creators, and that's remained the same. I've expanded a little bit in that I've invited on guests that I believe may not be people who've created their own products to sell, but are people in positions that can help those people. So I've had experts in PR and marketing and using Shopify and all kinds of topics like that. I guess the only other thing that's changed is, I wouldn't even say it's changed. I think it's just expanded is I've sort of worked in the last couple of years to create a bit of a community around the podcast, because one of the things that, unexpected things that I realized I was getting from it is I was really building my network because I was having guests come on. I was talking to them, finding out about their business, and

then I knew that person and I really liked that. And then as I was speaking to more people, I would suddenly think, oh, do you know you should speak to this person because they've done something similar to you? And I was starting to see connections. So as well as the podcast, I then set up a Facebook group, which is completely free, where I invite in listeners and guests just so that people can connect with each other. That was never a goal to create that connection, but I just think it's a really nice kind of side benefit, if you like. I really like that. I know lots of people that are doing similar things, and the fact that they've come on the podcast and they've shared their time sort of tells me they're the sort of person that are happy to help others as well. So it's really nice when someone says, oh, do you know how to do this? And I can say, actually I don't, but I do know someone who might be able to help you. And that's just really nice as well.

Colin: Gabe, Board Game Design Lab

Gabe: that core concept stayed true up until today, right? I never do an episode that I'm not excited about. I never talk to anyone that I'm not excited to chat with. I don't do anything based on, oh, I think this will get a lot of listens, oh, I think this will get a lot of clicks. I could, and maybe my business would be a little bigger if I had done that. If I chased trends and stuff like that. I don't know, it seemed disingenuous. I don't want to have to fake a conversation. I don't want to have to fake excitement or fake interest or curiosity. And so 99% of the episodes I've done, it was really a moment in time where I was trying to figure something out. And so I just reached out to a designer or a publisher or a reviewer or somebody in the industry in some way and said, hey, I'd love to interview you on a specific topic. And that topic just happened to be exactly the topic that I was working through myself. Right. And so I did that because I feel like a person in that scenario asks the best questions because they're right in the thick of trying to understand. They're trying to figure out they don't have the curse of knowledge. And so you can ask really good questions that other people in the same situation who are trying to figure out the same thing, well, they probably have those same questions, if not something very similar. And so that's always been a core concept. Recently, all the AI stuff that's been blowing up and I've been getting people sending me emails of like, hey, you need to do an episode on this. I've gotten people saying, hey, I'm an expert on AI and art and all this stuff. I'd love to come on the show and do an interview, but I'm just not excited to chat about that for an hour. And so I haven't done that episode, and there's a lot of examples like that. And maybe one day I'll dive into that and be like, oh, this would be cool, and then I'll do it. So that's kind of always stayed the same, even as the business around it has become a thing. Because again, I didn't start this thinking, oh, it's going to be a business. Like, no, I started it because I was trying to understand game design and I saw an opportunity and a need just to help people, help myself. And it just kind of picked up momentum, picked up speed, and became a full time income unexpectedly. Right. Surprisingly, definitely wasn't a plan or anything. And, yeah, again, it's just been kind of crazy to see it all develop. But I never wanted to get away from doing the interviews that I really want to do versus oh, let's do it just because. No thanks.

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